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FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

New-Hampshire Society

FOR THE

PROMOTION OF TEMPERANCE,

READ BEFORE THE SOCIETY,

JUNE 2, 1830,

TOGETHER WITH THE ADDRESS

OF

REV. PRESIDENT LORD,

UPON THE SAME OCCASION.



Concord:

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1830.

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Secretary.

Rev. ANDREW RANKIN, Salisbury.

REPORT.

THE Executive Committee of the *N. H. Society for the Promotion of Temperance*, beg leave to present their first Annual Report, and in doing this, they congratulate the members of the Society and the friends of the Temperance cause, upon the unparalleled success which has attended the efforts made in this State, and throughout the Union, for the suppression of intemperance. They would not forget also to render their devout thanksgivings to Almighty God, for the abundant evidence he has afforded them, that this cause is approved by Him, and that he has taken it under his especial care. No moral enterprise within the memory of man, or within the range of history, ever met with such rapid success, or was attended with such important consequences. This success is the more wonderful that it has been accomplished amid the most formidable obstacles that exist to impede the progress of any cause. Appetite, interest, custom, prejudice and education, have been combined in array against it. When your Committee look upon the vast amount of capital invested in the manufacture and vending of ardent spirits, the inveterate habit of drinking in which a large majority, in fact almost all the American people were educated, producing a strong and almost irresistible appetite for the stimulating effects of alcohol, together with the almost universal belief of the utility of distilled liquors—the mighty change that has been effected within the short period of four years, appears to them almost incredible. What but a firm conviction of the necessity of such a change—what but the most decided and active measures could have effected it? Indeed, such a necessity there was, and such measures have been pursued. Sampsons have come up to the work, and Goliaths have fought with the success of David.

Your Committee regret that they have it not in their power to give you a perfect history of the temperance cause in their own State. For various reasons information on this subject is difficult to be collected. Societies that have been formed, although many of them are termed Auxiliary, and are so in fact and in spirit, yet they pursue their own measures, doing all they can for the reformation of the particular towns and counties in which they are located, but make no report to this Society. It was expected that every town and county society would annually report to the Secretary of the State Society, that the Committee might in their annual report, spread before the public a full and accurate account of the number of societies, and of their members, and of the progress and influence of the cause in New-Hampshire. For the purpose of obtaining this information your Secretary, in March, 1829, and afterwards in the summer of that year, made special application by a published circular to all the societies in the State, but had the pleasure of receiving returns from only eleven of them. Your Society has had no agent in their immediate employ, or any person bound to collect and communicate information on this subject. The consequence is that we are very much in the dark as to what has been done in our own State. But such information as your committee have, they will now proceed to lay before you.

NUMBER OF SOCIETIES.

It is computed that there are as many as eighty societies in the State. These societies are formed on the principle of total abstinence from distilled liquors. The number of members varies from twenty to three hundred; containing in the whole probably between 7 and 8000. Many of these societies have been very active and done much good. In some

towns they have almost banished ardent spirits from use. In others their influence has been less; but in all, propitious. Yet temperance societies do not contain all the temperance persons in the State. Many who approve and practice the most rigid abstinence have not affixed their names to the list. These societies contain members of almost all ages and all classes in the community—some of every profession and employment—of every religious sect and every political party. The evils of intemperance have united for its suppression men who could think alike on no other subject. Here they have met and unitedly fought as for their lives. When themselves, their children, and their common country, demanded it, they have been enabled to forget the differences that arrayed them against each other, and to unite for their common defence. Here as many parties and sects as nations on the day of Pentecost, speak the same language, the language of temperance. Long may this continue to be the case, and far, very far, be the day removed, when political or religious parties shall divide the members of temperance societies.

A society has been formed for each county in the State, except the counties of Rockingham and Coos, making six county societies. In Merrimack county a society exists in every town except three. Measures have been taken to form a society in every town in Cheshire county. There is a society in almost every town in Sullivan and Grafton counties. It is apprehended that Strafford county is behind the other counties in the State, and perhaps Rockingham next. It is hoped that these counties will soon come up to the rest, and that the glorious fact may soon be announced that in every county and town of the Granite State, there exists a society for the promotion of temperance.

DIMINUTION IN THE SALE AND USE OF SPIRITOUS LIQUORS.

Your Secretary has received letters from various persons in the State, and to the inquiry, what has been the diminution in the use of ardent spirits within three years, the answer has been, from one to two thirds.—On this point, and also for another purpose, your committee will introduce copies of a correspondence between the temperance society of Keene, and Dr. Amos Twitchell, President of the New-Hampshire Medical Society, as follows :

KEENE, JULY 11, 1829.

DR. AMOS TWITCHELL,

Dear Sir—The Executive Committee of the society for the suppression of intemperance in this town, having been instructed by the society to make inquiries relative to the object for which the society was instituted, desire you to state,

1. The result of your experience and observation in your profession in regard to the comparative consumption of ardent spirits in the years 1826 and 1828.
2. The proportion of the diseases prevalent in this vicinity produced by the excessive use of ardent spirit, and its effect upon the human constitution.
3. The degree in which they are useful in preserving health and curing disease.

S. HALE, for the Committee.

To which Dr. Twitchell, on the 15th July, 1829, replied as follows :
To SALMA HALE, ESQ.

Dear Sir—In complying with the request of the executive committee of the society for the suppression of intemperance in this town, as expressed in your note of the 11th inst., I would remark that I am not in the possession of sufficient data to warrant me in being very definite in replying to all your inquiries.

You first request the opinion I have formed from observation, and inquiry as to the comparative consumption of ardent spirits in the years 1826 and 1828. I should think that what has been denominated the temperate and fashionable use of ardent spirits in this vicinity, had since the first mentioned period, diminished seven eighths in the quantity consumed. It is not now as formerly a mark of civility and politeness to offer it to every calling friend and neighbor—and a great many of our farmers and mechanics have banished it entirely from their farms and shops—and in some few instances the intemperate have forsaken their cups. Upon the whole, I think I am warranted by facts in coming to the conclusion that the consumption of ardent spirits in this town and vicinity has diminished two thirds since the year 1826.

To say in answer to your second inquiry, what proportion of all our diseases are produced by ardent spirits, would be impossible; for in many instances the cause of disease is hidden from our sight. But all who have paid a proper attention to the subject, will agree with me in saying, that their effect upon the human constitution, even when used in a temperate manner, is to dispose to almost every form of acute disease; and there is scarcely a chronic disease to be named, that has not been produced by their habitual use. Persons predisposed to disease from other causes, will frequently excite it by the use of ardent spirits, when by abstinence they might escape. And this predisposition is frequently entailed by intemperate parents upon their offspring.

To point out fully the various ways in which ardent spirits produce disease, cannot be expected of me at this time; but from the attention I have paid to the subject, in watching its effects upon the human system, and investigating the remote and proximate cause of disease, I have come to the conclusion that more than one half of all the diseases amongst us, especially in adults, has been produced in one way or another by the use of ardent spirit.

You inquire in what degree spirits were useful in preserving health, or in curing disease.—They are not absolutely necessary in either case. I am aware that the celebrated Dr. Rush names two cases in which spirits may be administered with safety and advantage. 1st. When the body has been suddenly exhausted of its strength, and a disposition to faintness is induced. 2d. When the body has been exposed a long time to wet weather—more especially if combined with cold. These are the only cases in which he allows distilled spirits to be useful to persons in health; in the first of which the water of Ammonia or Sulphuric Ether will answer every purpose; and in the latter, a cup of warm tea or coffee, and at the same time rubbing the surface with a warm flannel, or bathing with tepid salt water, would be far preferable to the use of spirit.

It has been the vulgar opinion that spirits were necessary for persons attending upon the sick, to prevent infection or contagion; but this idea is certainly erroneous. I am fully convinced, by the observation of facts, that nurses and other attendants upon the sick, who totally abstain from taking spirit, are not so liable to contract disease, as those who are in the habitual use of it.

In curing diseases, spirits are unnecessary; other remedies might in every instance be substituted, with advantage and perfect safety.

The foregoing letter exhibits the extent of the reformation in Keene a year ago. It is well known that active measures in this cause have been pursued in that region since the date of the foregoing correspondence, and no doubt with happy results. The same diminution has taken place in other towns. In Lyme, the diminution has been eleven twelfths. In the region of Plymouth, probably as great. Your committee wish that they had more extensive information on this subject; but from what they do know, they feel safe in coming to the conclusion, that a diminu-

tion of more than one half has taken place upon an average in the State ; and the expense thereby saved in the bare purchase of the article is about \$200,000 ; a sum for the yeomanry of New-Hampshire, in these hard and pinching times, by no means inconsiderable.

STORES AND TAVERNS.

The extent of the temperance reformation may be seen at our stores and taverns. Formerly in every village the store and the tavern was the resort of the idle and dissipated. Here they spent a great proportion of their time and money : but few stores in the State now mix liquors, or sell them in glasses and gills. To an attentive observer the change in the character of our stores has been such as to excite admiration. Not being able to procure their drams, the idle and dissipated have left them ; and although some of them may have resorted to the taverns instead, yet this effect is not so great as might have been expected. Public sentiment has so much changed, that it is not common to see one drunkard around taverns. Taverners are ashamed of them, and do not in many places encourage their attendance. The consequence is, that public drinking, even of those who continue to drink, is much less than formerly. Many traders in this State, and some few taverners, do not keep the article of spirits for sale—induced to abandon the traffic from a conviction of its immoral and pernicious effects. Your committee wish the number of such was greater, or that they knew the full number of such traders and taverners, that they might give their names to the world, as patriots and philanthropists, whose conduct does honor to themselves and their country, and affords such conclusive evidence of the beneficial influence of temperance societies.

REFORMATION OF DRUNKARDS.

Your committee have ascertained that the number of intemperate persons in the State, who have become reformed men since the institution of temperance societies, is about one hundred. This is to the philanthropist one of the most pleasing effects of the doctrine of total abstinence from spiritous liquors. Who will refuse to rejoice that one hundred persons in this State, who were not only useless to themselves but pests to society, are reclaimed, and restored to usefulness and respectability ? After this, let us not hear from a member of the New-Hampshire Legislature, that “the only way to cure a drunkard is to chop off his head.” The temperance enterprise has indeed effected a reformation, not only from the moderate but from the immoderate use of spirits. One thousand and five hundred persons in the United States are ascertained to have experienced this reform, and bear testimony that abstinence is a better medicine than decapitation.

DISEASE, LITIGATION AND CRIME.

It is thought the diminution of the use of ardent spirits has already had an effect in lessening the diseases, litigation and crimes in the State. This no doubt is in a measure true ; but we have hardly had time to make any very accurate calculations on this point. But the fact that the use of such liquors produces disease, litigation and crime, furnishes conclusive evidence that their disuse will lessen them.

CHURCHES.

Several whole churches have become temperance societies, although it is a lamentable fact, that professors of religion have not in general come up to the doctrine of their divine Master, and denied themselves, and taken up the cross of modern temperance. The power of religion has been too feeble in the hearts of many of its professors to have induced them to abandon their cups. Members of churches often pass the

ntoxicating bowl to persons who refuse it from principle, yet make no profession of religion : and such members are known to deal in the article, when traders in their neighborhood, who are not members of the church, are unable to continue the traffic from conscientious scruples. Your committee mention this fact without comment.

SAILORS AND SOLDIERS.

Till within a few years, a sailor or a soldier, who abstained from the use of ardent spirits, was hardly to be found. Within a short time temperance societies have been established among both these classes ; vessels are now fitted out from our own seaport, and from many other ports in the United States, without the article on board ; and at some stations the common soldiery refuse their whiskey rations, and practice the principle of entire abstinence. In our own State, some militia companies have performed their company and regimental duties without the aid of intoxicating drinks. Some of our militia officers have, in the range of their duties, recommended entire abstinence to their troops, and have practised the plan themselves.

FARMERS AND MECHANICS.

The farmers and mechanics of New-Hampshire have many of them in various places carried on their business without the use of any kind of spiritous liquors. In some towns fifty farms are cultivated without this stimulating drink. In almost all towns you may find some cold water farmers, and some cold water mechanics. Wherever found they are not a whit behind their rum-drinking brethren—generally before them. Upon these classes much, very much, depends. Could they all be induced to come into the temperance movement of the day, the result of all our wishes would be accomplished, and temperance would have in substance effected its triumph. Many, we may say most, of the intemperance persons in the State are day laborers. Rum has reduced them to the necessity of getting their bread and their drink too from hand to mouth. Would all our farmers and mechanics therefore refuse to furnish them with spirits, and pay them in such articles as are necessary for their families, they would all be gainers by the plan. The laborers would be more useful to themselves and to their employers.

CLERGY, PHYSICIANS AND LAWYERS.

These three professions are generally united in pushing forward the temperance enterprize. There is hardly a rum-drinking clergyman in the State. Till within five years they nearly all drank spirits ; and many in no small quantities. The same and more was true of the two other professions. Now hardly a clergyman—very few lawyers—or physicians use the article. It is nearly banished from the three learned professions. Some of these classes have done much in this cause as advocates. Lawyers lay aside their law books, and mount the temperance rostrum. Here they exert an important influence, and atone, in a great measure, for the evil they are supposed in vulgar opinion to do in their professional business. Physicians have also become preachers in this cause, and the address of our own President is now ranked among the most popular and useful publications on this subject. Certainly much credit is due to the three professions ; more perhaps to the two last, as temperance, more than any other one thing, will lessen their business, and of course their pecuniary income.

THE PRESS.

Much aid has been derived to this cause from that powerful engine of public sentiment, the Press. Besides the almost innumerable amount of tracts, addresses and sermons that have issued from the Press, our own

newspapers have, in most instances, advocated the temperance enterprise. No one is known to have openly and avowedly opposed it. It has done much ; much is yet expected from it ; and it is hoped that Editors will continue to insert in their papers temperance essays and temperance news ; knowing that among their subscribers are found many to whom such articles are full of interest.

THE UNITED STATES.

But the success of our cause is not confined to New-Hampshire. The whole Union has experienced the benefits of it. Other States have done more than we have. Much public feeling has been awakened on this subject in all New-England ; in the middle, and it has extended to the southern & western States. Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, N. York, N. Jersey and Pennsylvania, are far before us. These States have entered into the work with all their strength. In some of them agents are employed who devote all their time to the formation of societies. One hundred and fifty thousand are numbered as members of the temperance society in the United States. As many more are with us in all but the name. Yet fearful odds are against 300,000 drunkards, besides the millions who are in the road thither. To oppose this army of intemperance and temperate drinkers, we need much real and constant unremitted exertions. But your committee entertain unshaken confidence in the universal spread of temperance ; and whether the triumph of this cause be distant or near, the day, whenever it comes, will be the proudest day in the annals of the world.

OTHER COUNTRIES.

In Europe too, the cause of temperance is gaining ground. Societies on the plan of the American societies are established in England, Ireland and Scotland. In Germany also, they are entering upon the work. In Canada, Nova-Scotia and in some of the West India Islands, the success of the temperance enterprise in America, has stimulated them to exertion, and they are entering into the cause with zeal and activity. In all these countries, the temperance enterprise of this country is regarded with admiration. They speak of it as elevating our national character, and affording evidence of the moral strength of our citizens, such as the world never before saw. Let us continue to deserve this enviable distinction, and in after time, when intemperance in ardent spirits is known only in history, let it be said that the young republics of North America were first to expel the monster—that here was found the club of Hercules—and here the hand to wield it.

All which is respectfully submitted.

ADDRESS.

I shall ask the indulgence of this Society for a few remarks on the existing evil of intemperance, and the movement for reformation, which distinguishes the present time, as being together both the fruit and evidence of the genius of American liberty, and the controlling spirit of our public institutions.

Every individual exhibition of intemperance is doubtless related to some cause in the moral infirmity of man, the peculiarities of his physical organization, and the force of external solicitations. But as with other public evils affecting the general interests of society, so I apprehend with that excessive use of ardent spirit which has polluted and disgraced our country, there is a principle in the constitution of society itself which gives to all these vices a character, and becomes the measure of their extent and influence.

There are gratifications of man's degenerate nature if possible worse, and more ruinous, and more hopeless than intemperance, which have been elsewhere more pervading, and more destructive. But finding here no justification or apology in the character of our public institutions, they have had no prevalence, or have given place to other wrong indulgences, which these institutions, at least in their early operations, have had no power to restrain. Other indulgences, not more earnestly desired, not more easily obtained, have fallen in with the spirit of our various establishments, the spirit of our liberty and independence, and under its influence have grown and spread, till that spirit itself, always jealous of its prerogatives, has trembled for its own ascendancy, and is now gathering up its strength to destroy the monsters to which it had unconsciously given birth.

The evil of intemperance, however it certainly proceeds naturally from the peculiar constitution of man, and is strengthened by the condition and circumstances of his being, and however always, till the renovation of the world, it will discover itself, to some extent, in all its hateful and appalling forms, yet never, I believe, would have attained to its acknowledged greatness and power in this country, but for the spirit of our times, the genius of our governments, the character of all our constitutions and administrations. It is an evil, like others of that legion in all the departments of religion, and science, and politics, as well as morals, which always springs up in the pathway of freedom, and obstructs the incipient workings of the unshackled mind, till such time as the mind, in the exercise of its own reason, acted upon by the word & spirit of God, purges itself, and opens & clears its own glorious course, and presses onward, till it shall realize, not the dreams of a vain philosophy, but the sure word of prophecy, when the hearts and passions of men shall be subdued, and that kingdom which consisteth in righteousness, peace and joy shall be established forever.

The great conflict, hitherto always carried on in this world, has been between sense and reason, the power of appetite and the force of truth. In this controversy the animal has gained uniform ascendancy over the intellectual and moral properties and powers of man, unless when

adventitious restraints have been thrown in, to check the control of the passions, and give strength and confidence to the higher principles of our nature. The instruments of our inferior propensities have varied according to the age, the period, the character of society, the spirit of laws, and have prevailed over men in the form of sensuality, of rapine, of war, of luxurious refinement, or besotting intemperance, as accident may have given a first direction to the public mind, or as circumstances may have rendered one or another of these modes of excitement most accessible to the different classes of society. But in all ages and nations, by whatever means the human character has been debased, and human happiness destroyed, the spring and origin of the evil has been in the predominance of the appetites over the judgment and affections, and the means themselves have been determined, and have come into general use, not so much by reason of the peculiar strength of this or another of our propensities, as by the advantages afforded by the situation and condition of society for its indulgence.

Intemperance has generally been most evident, and assumed its worst forms, in those states of society which have been most exempt from the control of government and law, and in which at the same time the means of gratification have been generally accessible. Here, in the absence of fear, of the feeling of responsibility, the lower appetites have sought the most rapid and powerful excitements, and passion uncontrolled has arrived at the triumphs which could be most easily and extensively achieved. In a savage state the ruin produced by this instrumentality is general and soon accomplished. In a despotism, where the arm of power is vigorous, and is omnipresent, the evil is comparatively unknown; and between them both, just in proportion, usually, as society approaches nearer to severe government or to anarchy, the evil is diminished or increased. Other causes, it is true, have operated more or less extensively, to affect the character and prevalence of the evil, and through other causes, of a moral nature, doubtless the evil must ultimately be subdued. But, as yet, they have, in almost no country, had an influence so diffusive and sensible, and penetrating, as to reach all classes, and affect the springs of action in the common mind, in any comparison with the spirit and power of the Laws.

Our own country presents a remarkable spectacle among the nations, a people thrown off from the great mass of the subjugated world, broken away from power and prejudice, from superstition and oppression, yet not thrown down into the opposite depths of intellectual and moral degradation; a people enlightened and yet free, rearing up for themselves a government and institutions so framed and constituted as to furnish excitements both to the higher and the inferior principles of our nature, and called by Providence, amidst opportunities for good and evil, and motives addressed to man as he is formed by his Creator, to choose between the high destinies of glory and honor, or indignation and wrath. We are a people set up for an experiment, the first that the world has yet been prepared to sustain, between the power of opposite influences, of contending principles in the constitution of man; an experiment yet remaining to shew whether human society, furnished with all convenient advantages of improvement, and held by no restraints but such as consist with the entire free agency of its indi-

vidual members, and are obviously necessary to common preservation, shall rise or fall, and contribute to the emancipation or the more entire degradation of the world.

The degree of success which has hitherto attended this experiment is to be ascribed doubtless to the intelligence and virtue of the Fathers of this country, and the provision which they made for the transmission and diffusion of the means of knowledge and religion. With the spirit of liberty that breathes through all the departments of society, have been associated, from the beginning, the wholesome influences of learning and of truth, and these have had no inconsiderable effect to restrain our tendencies to licentiousness and decline. But our country has outgrown its means of instruction; a busy commerce has filled our cities with crowds who live only to enjoy the privileges of freemen, without these advantages of intellectual and moral improvement which alone could preserve these privileges from abuse. A population, spreading itself over the vast extent of our fertile soil, have gone beyond the limits of the schools and churches, which would have formed their minds to habits of reflection, and sentiments of piety. Wealth, and fashion, and amusement have lured our sons and daughters away from the scenes of their fathers' industry, and study, and devotion, to the resorts of pride and pleasure. The story of our liberties, our plenty, our happiness has drawn to our shores the abject and suffering of other nations, who have spread themselves over the land to partake of its blessings, without knowing the source whence these blessings have proceeded, and without regard for the means by which only they can be preserved. These several classes, constituting a large proportion of our population, multiplied by the vigorous action of free governments and institutions, yet left comparatively destitute of moral cultivation, have almost necessarily fallen the victims of appetite, and abused their very liberty to the purposes of licentious gratification. They have corrupted themselves, and their families, and neighborhoods, till a counter current of iniquity has set back against the influence of the wise and more virtuous classes of society, and as a deluge of fire has well nigh overwhelmed the land.

It would seem sufficient, upon these general principles, to account for intemperance, not indeed as a physical or moral evil, but for its rapid progress and its wide extent in this country. The strong action of freedom has thrown us, as a people, beyond the scope and reach of those principles, upon which freedom itself was first obtained, and its early institutions were set up and cherished. It has hurried us where truth and reason cease to exert their power, and the excitement of baser passions prevails over what remains of the moral sense. It has urged us till we seem to have lost almost every other consciousness than that we are free and equal and independent, and to have drawn no other conclusion from these legitimate premises, than that we may now indulge, each one without let or hindrance, the propensities of nature. And what is worse, to these propensities, almost all the high occasions on which the triumphs of liberty are celebrated, its rights asserted, its privileges and its franchises enjoyed, have supplied ever new & increasing stimulus. To this fancied Divinity we have poured out libations unceasing. At every festive meeting, in the sculptured hall and under

every green tree, at the table of our hospitality, in the resorts of business and pleasure, and on the filthier scenes of profligacy and vice, till we have almost realized the guilt of Judah and Jerusalem, rising up early in the morning to follow strong drink, and continuing until night till wine inflamed them, and the tabret, and pipe, and wine were in their feasts, while they regarded not the work of the Lord, nor the operation his hands. And still onward, ministering to these grosser excitements, this diseased, unmoralized habit of the mind, our presses, the formers of public character, and in their turn, by a natural and necessary reaction, themselves more conformed to the spirit which they excite, have too often merely stirred up those fires of passion which intemperance always feeds, and where they should have controlled and regulated, have given a freer license, and where they should have bound more closely the impassioned mind, have severed the cords of moderation and of judgment, and confirmed that ascendancy of unhallowed zeal over the different and opposite interests of society, which is sure to bring them altogether subject to the influence of the destroyer.

It is impossible, from the nature of the views here presented, to be very precise in tracing the course of intemperance through this country. From the specified origin, and before this respected audience it is unnecessary. The influence of moral causes upon the public mind and character, though sure as the operation of any of the laws of Providence, is not so immediate and palpable as to be presented always in definite forms, and in its direct action. The kingdom of darkness, as truly as the kingdom of light, cometh not with observation. It is within—it is known only by its practical exhibitions and results. But the correspondence between the effect and the alleged cause is too obvious to leave upon the mind any doubt of their intimate connection. In other circumstances, it is true, the same cause, operating in higher degrees, and with fewer accidental hindrances, has hurried the unsettled mind to a different and more atrocious wickedness. While it has only filled our land with a literal intoxication, it has made other lands drunk with blood, a mere beginning, or omen it may be, of a more terrible desolation, when insulted and oppressed humanity, asserting its rights against its proud oppressors, though without that intelligence and piety which guided and restrained the hand of the asserters of American liberty, shall raise itself against the overbearing insolence of ecclesiastical and civil power, and fill not France alone, or Spain, but Europe, and the world, with the fury of that battle of the great day of God Almighty, in which man's unholy passions shall spend their last remaining force, and prepare the way for other generations to build up freer and holier institutions upon the ruins which war and wickedness shall have made. But the cause and the effect have always the same character, though with different modifications. It is passion hurrying the unsteady mind to the gratification of inferior appetite, and here and every where making wreck of the Creator's noblest work, till recovering mercy shall say it is enough, and truth and reason, through an influence from above, shall achieve their destined triumphs over the lusts that war within us.

It is an occasion of high congratulation, that that redeeming spirit, which formed the institutions of our country, and adapted them so exactly to the character and relations of man in his social state, is now breaking forth from them to check the excesses to which, through the

infirmity of the human mind, & the power of human passions, they have ministered so many occasions, and is calling forth those energies, which have only slumbered, to curb the wrong propensities of our nature, and give a new and safer direction to the public mind. Despite of all the evils to which the spirit of liberty in our country has given rise, and of all the fears which those evils have excited ; despite of all that fermentation which pervades the mass of our population, in which our errors and our immoralities, and our more degrading vices seem to prevail over the purer elements of our constitutions and of our character, we still recognise the powerful working of those principles, which we are assured shall renovate society, and purify, and exalt, and perpetuate its institutions. There is that in the spirit of freedom itself, which, after its first strong excitement is past, calls forth the secret energies of the mind, brings out in fair development its highest powers, and which, when associated with intelligence and virtue, and public spirit, will correct its own mistakes, repair its own wrongs ; and becoming more enlightened, and more chastened, and regulated, will realize all the objects of its early aspirations, though not perhaps in the forms in which they were first conceived, and secure those high interests for which it toiled, and resisted, and suffered, and triumphed, in breaking away from the thralldom of prejudice and the persecutions of power. If I had no assurance that the Almighty had set his bow in the heavens, and would never again leave the world to wickedness, such as the waters of a flood only could purge away ; if I had no evidence that he had a covenant with our Fathers, and would not leave the heritage which he gave them to possess at the cost of tears and blood ; if I looked only at the established connection of cause and effect, I should predict that the power of truth, the force of principle, the free action of mind, the dictates of conscience, the influence of learning and of religion, all left untrammelled by any arbitrary will, by any capricious enactments or entangling alliances, and having their fair operation, through the statutes and administration of equal governments, would at length prevail over the corruptions and disorders of society, and bring the material into due subjection to the purified moral and spiritual constitution of our nature. And how much more may this confidence be indulged in view of those inspired declarations, which assure us that whenever and wherever these causes exist, they are appointed for this very end, and will be sustained in their operation by an unseen, all pervading, all controlling power, till the end shall be accomplished.

The reformation from intemperance, in which this Society bears so honorable a part, is to be regarded as perhaps the most decisive of all the instances in which the public mind in this country is recovering itself from its excesses, and vindicating the excellence and the power of the institutions of our fathers. It is the great triumph, in our day, of principle over passion ; the great evidence, standing out before the world, of the purifying influence of associated freedom, and patriotism, and intelligence, and virtue. It is a practical commentary upon the spirit of our government and laws which is filling Europe with astonishment ; and baffling the calculations of those boasted statesmen and philosophers, who, having seen only the early extravagances of liberty, & knowing not the depth and force of those principles which here spring up with it, and presently give it direction and support, have assumed its

decline to be as necessary and rapid as its advance. A reformation so general, so instantly following upon the statements of the common evil, effected against the influence of the strongest prejudice, and most inveterate habits, in which the distinctions of party, the jealousies of rival interests are well nigh forgotten, fostered and cherished by men of all ranks and denominations, and carried forward with a spirit and determination before which no difficulties can stand, is a thing unknown before in the history of the world, and shews a latent energy in our whole political constitution to which there has been no parallel among the nations. It is like the resolution of an individual mind, oppressed and wounded, but unsubdued, and by a desperate conclusive effort throwing off its fetters and its load; a mind conscious of its own high privileges and destiny, and disdaining equally a despot's yoke, whether enslaving it to the will of a tyrant, or the power of lust. It marks a new era in the history of morals, and the future economists, and statesmen, and philanthropists of our country, as our still increasing promise of wealth, and power, and virtue shall be fulfilled, will look back upon it as one of the highest achievements of independence, and connected with results as important in their order as the declaration of our civil freedom.

There are those, I am well aware, who are accustomed to regard all such enterprizes as visionary, and our commendation of them as idle declamation, and who predict a worse reaction, and seek by ridicule or reproach to turn us from our pursuit. We can meet them as patriots, and justify by all our love of country those deeds of benevolence which have for their object the purifying of the public mind, the reformation of the public morals, and by consequence the preservation of our common liberties. We can meet them as philosophers, and upon their own pretence of the destined perfectibility of man, can assert at least as good a claim to be hastening society towards that desirable consummation as their's who let the tide of iniquity roll on, nor attempt to dry up its fountains, nor obstruct, nor turn its course. We can meet them as philanthropists, and present to them the argument of a wife's, a mother's, a sister's gratitude, for that instrumentality by which we rescue them from poverty, and misery, and disgrace, or preserve them in the enjoyment of blessings, which but for us an enemy would steal away, and the hope of at least one generation would be extinguished. We can meet them as Christians, with our high commission to do good and to communicate, and our revealed assurance, that "he who converteth the sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins." We can meet them on all these grounds, with the story of our successes, of the miserable victims of intemperance we have rescued, the families we have gladdened, the communities we have elevated, the commerce we have purified, the products of labor we have increased, the efforts of mind we have multiplied, and the sources of wealth, of knowledge, and of salvation we have opened. And we can ask, if on every principle of sound philosophy, these effects must not themselves become causes of other similar, and still increasing benefits? if knowledge, and temperance, and righteousness are mere names, or fancies, that have no reality, and no significance, and no influence, and no abiding results? At least we can ask, if the world is so lost and so hopeless that we may fold our arms and look on

as indifferent spectators, while successive ranks of our degraded and suffering fellow beings are pressing each other into ruin ?

But we shall maintain the advantages we have gained. The reformation we accomplish is but one among many of the triumphs of a free and enlightened people over their own corruptions, but one among the many causes which are now conspiring to elevate our character as a nation, and perpetuate our blessings. That same recovering power which operates through this society, and its associates in the same enterprise, is active in other kindred institutions, to correct and instruct the public mind, to encourage general morality, to promote industry and economy, to diffuse the advantages of education, and extend the influence of religious truth. And, favoring all this influence, the commercial relations of our country have changed, and call for new energies, and point to new pursuits, and demand new and better habits in all the departments of society. The tide which has borne us on to fortune is setting backward. We can no longer support our follies and our vices, nor give to corrupting fashion what has become necessary to life itself. The world too is changing. The spirit of liberty, of knowledge, of piety is going forth among the nations. The human mind is every where restless, dissatisfied, reaching after expected though unknown good, and through the multiplying means of improvement, is attaining its appropriate elevation, and exerting its quickening power. It is too late then to question the utility of our efforts, or the permanency of the good which they accomplish. There is here no application of a brute force which at length meets an overcoming resistance, but a mysterious leaven, diffusing itself through the vast masses of human society, and assimilating them to its own nature, until the whole shall be perfected. We co-operate only with mind itself, in its search after the privileges of its high destiny. We are but instruments which the reason and conscience of mankind are now employing to obtain a deliverance for the world from the vices which have enslaved it, and we have yet to learn, that our world is so fallen and so lost, that such influences, so united, and so concentrated, and having the promised blessing of the Almighty, must fail to save it.

But we may be instructed by the suggestions of those who come not yet to our help, and by the intimate practical knowledge of the human character which they possess, that the success of our enterprise must depend entirely upon moral influence, and will be measured by the degree of intelligence and virtue which shall distinguish the various classes of our citizens. The mere power of associations, of commercial regulations, of various secular establishments, is nothing, only as they subserve the higher purpose and effort of purifying the springs of action in the mind. Nor is it with such an enterprise as with those that have for their object the more spiritual interests of society, in which a more restrictive policy better adapts itself to the prejudices & peculiarities of various denominations & discordant sects. It is upon the broad ground of humanity, and upon principles and by measures that correspond with the first sentiments of human kindness, and find advocates wherever there are men, that the great objects of our union must be attained. It is ours in this relation to save individuals from a degrading servitude to vice, and society from confusion and desolation, and to open a possibility for the attainment of a higher glory. It is the part of others, and

of ourselves in other relations, and with reference to that higher end, to use, each man for himself, and every class as it shall choose, such an instrumentality; as private judgment and the sense of moral obligation shall direct. And so laboring, that fruit which cometh alike of equal exertions in a common cause of charity and beneficence, will be gathered in its time, in which he that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together.